

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **Climate Change Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Tuesday 5 December 2023 at 10.30 am.

Present:

Mr C Aitken (Remote)	Mr A Graham (Remote)
Ms S Atkin	Mr P Logue (Remote)
Mr J Bruce	Mr D Louden
Mrs I Campbell (Remote)	Mr R MacKintosh
Ms S Fanet (Remote)	Mr K Rosie (Chair)
Mr D Fraser	Ms K Willis (Vice Chair) (Remote)

Non-Members also present:

Dr C Birt	Mrs T Robertson (Remote)
Ms K McLean	Ms M Ross
Mr D Macpherson (Remote)	Mr P Oldham (Remote)

In attendance:

Ms K Lackie, Interim Depute Chief Executive
Mr N Osborne, Climate Change and Energy Team Manager
Ms F Daschofsky, Net Zero Project Manager
Ms N Wallace, Service Lead-Environment Dev Active Travel
Mr B Cameron, Service Interim Head Housing & Building Maintenance
Mr R Macdonald, Energy Manager
Mr A Morgan, Climate Change Coordinator
Ms R Burbaite, Climate Change Coordinator
Ms I MacMillan, Project Manager
Ms C Campbell, Head of Operations and Logistics
Mr A Collins, Strategic Procurement Manager
Ms F Conti, Category Manager Procurement
Ms S Barrie, Service Lead Design & Construction
Mr A McKinnie, Strategic Lead for Waste Strategy and Operations
Ms L Dunn, Joint Democratic Services Manager
Mrs O Bayon, Committee Officer

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

Mr K Rosie in the Chair

Business

1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr J Grafton and Mrs P Munro.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt/ Aithris Fhollaiseachd

There were no Declarations of Interest or Transparency Statements.

3. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

The Committee **NOTED** updates on the following issues:

- MockCOP28 at Highland Council; and
- Highland Council was the first UK local authority to be utilising energy benchmarking software and a demonstration of this was available in the foyer.

4. Net Zero Strategy – Action Plan Progress Report Ro-innleachd Neoni Lom – Aithisg Adhartais Plana-gnìomha

There had been circulated Report No CCC/19/23 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

Built Estate & Energy

- appreciation was expressed for all the hard work which officers had undertaken;
- regarding key risks/issues, clarification was sought and provided on how the process could be streamlined to improve the fee-income when staff were working on the net zero strategy;
- climate impacted every service, therefore the right resources must be allocated to the right activity to ensure success and deliver change;
- it was queried if the Action Plan would be ready and fully costed by March 2024, in addition it was also queried if the Council were on target to meet the requirements of net zero direct emissions 2038;
- there was a need for collaborative working with partners and to understand the full costs to enable leverage of external funds;

Planning, Land Use & Environment

- concern was raised whether the Council would have the sufficient financial resources to meet the climate change objectives;
- as the UHI had been unable to provide resource as intended, it was queried if the Council would consider an alternative University to ensure the project progressed;
- it was hoped that the repurposing of land would save money normally spent on maintenance;
- Members welcomed the ecological focus within the Plan;
- the desperate need for Housing across the Highlands was emphasised. In this regard, it was stressed that rural and remote areas needed to be included in the Plan, and houses in these areas must be affordable;
- regarding the mapping of highland carbon resources and the assessment process, it was queried what the costs were anticipated to be and how soon this would take place;

- Members highlighted that sea grass had a high rate of carbon capture and should be considered as part of the environmental plan. In this regard it was queried how much engagement there had been with organisations such as the Scottish Association for Marine Science for their guidance;

Procurement & Community Wealth Building

- it was queried if small local suppliers would have an opportunity to be included in the procurement frameworks;
- it was felt that community wealth building could be a stand-alone item in terms of addressing their own climate change opportunities, and this should be considered as the plans moved forward;
- it was important that the procurement structure gave contractors the opportunity to bid in specific procurement lots;
- it was confirmed that the Council would engage with the Highland and Islands Climate Action hub on Thursday 7 December 2023, and Members thanked officers for their input and looked forward to a future update;
- information was sought if carbon output would form part of procurement weighting process when awarding works;
- as the timeframe for developing a fully costed plan was dependant on available staffing resources, it was queried what dependant staffing resources would be required, and what current issues surround Capital procurement and HRA procurement;

Sustainable Business Travel

- it was queried what areas of Highland the electric powered gritter unit would be deployed to;
- it was felt that Members needed improved appreciation of climate change overall and it was suggested that the workshops would be a good mechanism to provide further information regarding combatting climate change. In this regard, it was highlighted that Members had many responsibilities inside and outside of the Council which placed heavy restrictions on their time;
- regarding the installation of additional electric chargers, it was queried if these would be available for public use and help generate additional income;
- it was confirmed that the Council provided updates to the press to promote the progress made towards combatting climate change;
- appreciation was expressed for the additional fleet which had been included during the covid 19 pandemic as part of the fleet rationalisation;
- an electric mobile library vehicle would be welcomed in Highland especially if it was funded by a third party grant payment;
- by way of reducing staff travel costs, it was suggested that local communities were empowered to take on minor works, such as grass cutting or car park line marking;
- in order to achieve the national target of 2030 to phase out all new petrol and diesel vehicles within Council fleet, a costing exercise and the identification of external grant funding would be required;
- it was queried if Members travel was included in the Action Plan;
- information was sought and provided whether depots were able to facilitate electric, diesel, and petrol heavy plant vehicles simultaneously;
- concern was raised that Highland Council was not engaging with all other seven Councils for the Pathfinder procurement exercise, in addition suggestion was made that Hi-trans could provide assistance;

Social Housing/HRA

- it was felt that the HRA energy investment procurement process should be split into Lots, and it was requested that suppliers could be added to the framework throughout the frameworks lifespan;
- regarding Appendix 6 section 7 of the report, further information was sought if this referred to properties where energy investment works costs were considered excessive and therefore would not be undertaken;
- in terms of housing energy efficiency works, it was queried if learnings were being shared with other social landlords across Highland to encourage them to carry out similar works to their housing stock;
- it was expressed that housing efficiency works to improve heating, make houses warmer and provide a better overall environment, added additional benefits to tenants such as improved health and reducing their costs. In this regard it was felt that these benefits should be included in the list of measured outcomes;
- regarding energy efficiency investment works which were not technically feasible at specific housing stock, it was requested that these costs were still to be included within the report so they could be referred to when setting the capital programmes, applying for external funding applications, and so Members were informed;
- it was queried what works would be undertaken at properties considered technically unfeasible to meet the energy efficiency standard;

Waste

- further information was sought to explain the comment that a number of workstreams related to behavioural changes for schools, and what would this mean for teachers and pupils;
- it was felt that in order to reduce food waste as schools, food menus should be designed to promote food that was up to the nutritional standard but more in line with what pupils would eat. In this regard it was highlighted that pupils should be involved in this process;
- it was queried if the waste team had sufficient resources to develop a fully costed Action Plan;
- regarding recycling waste material, it was queried how the Council was going to improve the recycling infrastructure across the estate;
- regarding section 3.1 of the report, it was queried what the terms of reference would be for the Net Zero Programme Board. In this regard it was confirmed that the terms of reference would be circulated to all Members; and
- regarding section 6.3 of the report, it was queried if a fully costed Action Plan would be developed. In this regard it was confirmed that non-cost indicators would be used only where costs were unable to be measured.

The Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the progress to date;
- ii. **NOTED** the draft Thematic Group Action Plans;
- iii. **NOTED** the new actions identified by the Net Zero Programme Board; and
- iv. **AGREED** the approach to costing the Action Plan.

**5. Raising awareness of external funding opportunities
A' togail aire mu chothroman maoin eachaidh on taobh a-muigh**

There had been circulated Report No CCC/20/23 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- it was suggested that PDF copies of the posters could be sent to community councils to advertise within local communities;
- regarding housing sited within conservation areas, it was queried if members of the historic team could recommend contractors or organisations to work with owners to carry out property repairs, maintenance or improvements; and
- it was queried if works such as external cladding would qualify for funded improvements.

The Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

**6. Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and Delivery Plan
Ro-innleachd agus Plana Libhrigidh Ionadail Teasa agus Èifeachdais Lùtha**

There had been circulated Report No CCC/21/23 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

During discussion Members expressed thanks for the report and requested that the next phase of the pilot included non-gas grid areas.

- * The Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to Full Council approval of the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan.

**7. Annual Report Under Public Bodies Climate Change Duties 2022/23
Aithisg Bhliadhnail fo Dhleastanasan Atharrachadh Gnàth-shìde nam
Buidhnean Poblach 2022/23**

There had been circulated No CCC/22/23 by the Interim Depute Chief Executive.

The Committee **NOTED** the Highland Council's return submitted for reporting year 2022/23 under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties.

The meeting concluded at 12:57pm.